



City of Freeport

Workshop

5:30 p.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall

August 13, 2018 Agenda

I. Meeting Called to Order

The August 13, 2018 Freeport City Council Budget Workshop was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Russ Barley. The meeting was held in City Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

Council Members present: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon, Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilwoman Amanda Green, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner and Councilman William "Boots" McCormick

- II.** Staff present: City Clerk Rebecca Podraza, Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle, Sewer Supervisor Robert Fawcett, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, and City Attorney Clay Adkinson.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Councilman Farris, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

III. 2018/2019 Budget

Mayor Barley turned the meeting over to the City Finance Officer Sara Bowers. Finance Officer Bowers presented the updated 2018/2019 Budget information.

Budget Highlights

- Additional part-time employee (Code Enforcement Officer)

Councilwoman Brannon spoke to the County Administrator and to his knowledge, the County has not stopped abiding by the Interlocal Agreement between the City and the County. The County Administrator advised Councilwoman Brannon that they have only received eight (8) code complaints within the last fourteen (14) months. Councilwoman Brannon is not sure this is something that the City should jump into at this time.

Councilwoman Brannon addressed the Council about the possibility of hiring a City Manager. This may be something the Council should look at before hiring more employees. A City Manager may be able to help the City streamline processes and look at how departments are currently being managed. This may be something to consider before

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hiring more employees.

Councilman Farris would like to hire someone to do part-time Code Enforcement. Having a Code Enforcement Officer would be a benefit to the City. The City is growing, and the County is busy with their own work and Councilman Farris likes the idea of the City having their own part-time Code Enforcement Officer.

City Planner Hughes-Neel addressed the Council regarding why the County only received eight (8) code complaints from the City in the last fourteen (14) months. Planner Hughes-Neel was notified by the County Code Enforcement Officers, that Billy Williams, Head of the Code Enforcement Department, decided that they were not required to do Code Enforcement work for the City. They advised they could take pictures, but they could not process code violations for the city any more. That is what they had been instructed by their Department Head.

Councilwoman Brannon said that when she talked to Mr. Jones, that it was their understanding that it would be written up and sent to the County and then their Code Enforcement Officers would investigate, write up a report, and send it back to the City. Mr. Jones also said they would be more than happy to take on Code Enforcement for the City. They need direction from the City as to what exactly is needed.

Councilwoman Haffner asked if the City would have enough work to keep a Code Enforcement Officer busy. Planner Hughes-Neel advised that the person would be hired to work on an as-needed-basis up to 20 to 30 hours a week.

Councilwoman Brannon and Planner Hughes-Neel discussed the current process for Code Enforcement at the City.

Councilwoman Green is worried about our Communication with the County and we need to clear that up before the City jumps into anything.

Planner Hughes-Neel advised that the Planning Department Staff is not certified in Code Enforcement and considers that to be a liability to the City. Planning Staff has plenty to

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do without being certified Code Enforcement Officers. One way or the other, it needs to be addressed.

Councilman McCormick advised that the County will want a set number of hours to guarantee the Officer hired to take care of the City. Councilman McCormick feels it would be more beneficial for the City to have their own Code Enforcement Officer.

Councilwoman Haffner reminded the Council that the County could cancel the agreement at anytime and then the City would be left without a Code Enforcement Officer.

Councilman Farris feels the City should keep the line item in the budget.

Planner Hughes-Neel advised the Council that handling issues in-house would take care of issues immediately. Waiting for the County to respond could take several days.

Council discussion ensued regarding the Code Enforcement position and current code violations and procedures. Council concurs that staff should not be going to properties alone without the certifications and training. It is unsafe.

Councilwoman Brannon will call the County to request more information. Planner Hughes-Neel was directed by the City Attorney to contact the County and ask for the direction from the Code Enforcement Department Head in writing. The position will remain in the budget until more information is brought back to the Council.

- Forensic Audit

Councilwoman Green requested information regarding the amount of money that was earmarked for the Forensic Audit in the last budget.

Finance Officer Bowers advised that money was put in reserves so that if the City did not spend any money in this year's budget, it would be available in the next budget year. Officer Bowers explained that the money was budgeted according to the four (4) phases in the agreement with the Firm.

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- Additional Employee (Deputy Clerk)

City Clerk Podraza requested to keep the additional employee, (Deputy Clerk) in the budget under Administration. The position title will be changed to Assistant Clerk and will be budgeted with the same salary as the Planning Technician. Council concurred that the position may remain in the budget.

Councilwoman Haffner addressed the Council regarding the Billing Department issues discussed at the last Budget Workshop. Council discussion ensued regarding hiring a Billing Supervisor verses the City Clerk cleaning up the Billing Department.

Councilman McCormick requested discussion regarding the Clerk's salary. Councilman McCormick asked if the whole salary increase requested at the last Budget Workshop was to manage the Billing Department, or if part of the salary adjustment requested was for the Clerk's current position. Council discussion ensued regarding the Clerk's salary, experience and certifications.

Councilman Farris requested that the budget line item for the Clerk's salary be adjusted to be the same as the Finance Officer salary. Finance Officer Bowers will update the Expenditures report for the next budget Workshop.

- Streets

No Changes

- Parks

Finance Officer Bowers advised that the Parks Director requested \$5,000.00 be added to the R&M for Lagrange Park. The property will probably not be fully developed in the next budget year, so this amount should cover the needs of the Park.

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- Water

Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle addressed the Council regarding the budget line item to increase the water line size on Bay Loop from 6" to 8". Councilman McCormick asked if it would be better to increase the line size to 10" so that it would be set for future growth. Water Supervisor Tuggle advised that the increase in cost to go to 10" lines would be approximately \$27,000.00. Council concurred that the additional amount should be added to the budget line item and to change the project to 10" water lines.

Council discussion ensued regarding the use of impact fees for the project. Council concurred that Impact Fees should be used for the project and directed the Finance Officer to reflect that in the budget documentation.

Water Supervisor Tuggle advised the Council that he would like to change his budget request to replace two truck motors. After further consideration, he believes the City should replace the 2008 truck and use the other truck for stand-by use only.

Councilman McCormick inquired if there was a trade-in for the Mini Excavator being requested under the line item titled *Equipment* in the amount of \$52,800.00. Water Supervisor Tuggle advised that the department has a small backhoe that could be traded in.

- Sewer

Sewer Supervisor Fawcett advised the Council that he will be taking the Infrastructure Improvements project back to the Engineering Department because they had added a lot of bells and whistles that are not necessary. Updated information will be brought back to the Council.

Councilwoman Brannon requested information regarding the SRF loan and how much the City will have to pay on the sewer portion. Finance Officer Bowers updated the Council on the process when the loan is finalized. Council discussion ensued and concurred that the City will do a budget amendment for the SRF Loan later in the budget year.

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- **Salaries**

Finance Officer Bowers presented the Basic Salary Information with a 3% increase across the board with the following exceptions:

- No adjustment for the Mayor's and Council's salary
- 1.5% increase for open positions – this is done to increase the starting pay for each pay range by 1.5% to assist in maintaining a competitive wage rate.

Councilwoman Haffner requested to put 3% into the budget for the Mayor with the rest of the employees. Mayor Barley advised that he received an increase in the last budget year.

Councilman McCormick requested information regarding the City paying for Council's health insurance premiums.

Council discussion ensued regarding the renewal of the proposed Blue Cross Employee Health Policy recommendation that will be made by Staff at the August 23, 2018 Regular Council Meeting.

- New numbers for lift stations will be brought back to the next meeting.
- Finance Officer Bowers will add a request to the agenda to schedule the last Budget Workshop at the August 14, 2018 Regular Council Meeting.
- Councilman Farris thanked the Staff and said they did a great job on the budget.

IV. Adjournment

Mayor Barley adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

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FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL

Mayor

ATTEST

City Clerk

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